

L O U N G E R.

[N^o LXXVIII.]

Saturday, July 29. 1786.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

S I R,

ONE of your earliest correspondents gave us an account of a worthy Baronet, a relation of his, who spent all his life intending to do many things, without ever having actually done any thing. Though this may not be a useful, it seems to me a very harmless way of passing one's days. I am the wife, Sir, of quite another kind of gentleman. My husband, *Mr Buffle*, always does things first, and then thinks of them afterwards.

One of the most important concerns of his life, I must own to you, he conducted in this manner, and I was his accomplice. We married on three days acquaintance at the house of a relation of his, where we happened to meet on a visit. We have, however, been a very decently happy couple, and have a family of very fine children. Mr Buffle indeed does not depend very much on us for the happiness of his life, and he has no time for conferring much happiness or bestowing much attention on us. He is of so active a spirit, so busy, so constantly employed, that pleasures of a domestic or a quiet kind do not enter at all into his plan of life.

His father was a careful æconomical man, and left him in a very comfortable situation, with a large estate, a set of thriving tenants, a good house, a well laid out farm, and a well stocked garden. When we went home, we had nothing to do, as the saying is, but to draw in our chairs and sit down. But sitting, however much at his ease, was not my husband's way. He soon made a great deal of business, though he had found none. It was discovered, that the principal apartments of our house were too low; so it was unroofed, to have some feet added to its height, and a new lead-covered platform put a-top, to command a view of a particular turn of the river that runs through the grounds. This kept us two winters in one of our tenant's houses, in which too, all the time we were in it, something or other was a-doing: so that the carpenter's

ter's hammer was heard every hour of the day. We had scarce got back to our own house again, when it was found that the water came through our lead-covered platform: so he had the pleasure of having that changed into a cupola, with a roof of a different construction; for the view of the river was still to be preserved. But next year, my husband discovered that a plantation was necessary on a particular knoll; so the view of the river we had paid so much for, was shut out by a clump. The garden was the next subject of amendment, in which an excellent fruit-wall was pulled down, to have it rebuilt on a new plan; by which new plan we have got a very beautiful wall, and trees admirably well dressed, but unfortunately we have lost all our fruit. The same thing happened by our acquisition of a new pigeon-house, which, notwithstanding the well-known superstition of its boding the death of the wife, my husband ventured to build. Luckily I survive the omen; but we have scarcely had a pigeon-pie since. In point of ornamental alterations, the same variety has taken place: We had first a smooth green lawn, though at the expence of cutting down some of the finest timber in the country; we then got a serpentine shrubbery, which within these two years has been dug up, to make room for a field with dropping trees, fenced by a ha-ha!

While he was beautifying his house and grounds, Mr Bustle was not inattentive to the improvement of his estate. After getting a new survey made of it by a very fine gentleman who came from your town in a post chaise and four, he sat down one morning with the plan before him, a scale and a pair of compasses in his hand, and that gentleman at his elbow; and while I was pouring out their tea, they raised the rents of it 200 per cent. as Mr Quadrant was pleased to express himself. Presently all our former tenants were turned out of their farms, except a few young men whom the late Mr Bustle, for what reason I know not, had marked in his rent-roll with a +, and a new set put into possession, who, as Mr Quadrant said, knew the *capabilities* of ground. Then there was such a pulling down of walls to make little fields large, and a planting of hedges to make large fields little; every thing in short was turned topsy turvy: but what won't people do to get rich? Mr Quadrant's calculations, however, have not answered with all the exactness we expected. The estate indeed, as our old steward told me, was considerably increased in its rent; "but, a-well-a-day! my Lady," said he, "it nets nothing." So Mr Bustle was obliged to alter that plan, after he had tried it for several years. He has got some of the old tenants back again;

gain; but a considerable part of his estate he has reserved in his own hands, of which he says he will treble the produce, by turning it into a sheep-walk. During this period, likewise, he has made several attempts to discover coal; and about three years ago, narrowly missed being worth L. 10,000 a-year by the unexpected failure of a lead-mine. These are Mr Bustle's serious occupations; his amusements are no less various, and he is equally ardent in his pursuit of them. He is a hunter, a shooter, and an angler; breaks his own horses, trains his own dogs, and is reckoned the most expert cocker within a hundred miles of us.

To do him justice, however, he is by no means selfish, either in his business or his pleasures. If any of his neighbours has an estate to be sold, a farm to be let, a garden to be laid out, a house to be built, a horse to be broke, or a pointer to be made; Mr Bustle will ride half a dozen miles at any time to give them his assistance and advice.

Unfortunately his own family are almost the only persons of whom he does not busy himself in the management and superintendence. To our two daughters I have endeavoured to give some little education at home; for my husband was always so occupied, either with his own affairs, or the affairs of other people, that though I often pressed him to send them to some place where they could acquire the accomplishments suitable to their sex and rank in life, he always delayed the measure till somehow or other the opportunity was lost. As for our three boys, they have cost me many an uneasy moment. They were sent to an academy in Yorkshire, to grafs, as my husband phrased it, at first, with a long plan for their education afterwards; but at grafs they continued till within these few months, when they returned home perfect colts indeed, with abundance of health and strength to be sure, but without a word of language that could be understood, in their mouths, or a single idea worth the having, in their heads. They had acquired, it is true, some knowledge, of which their father has made considerable use since their return, and with which he appears so well pleased as to have little thoughts of sending them any where else. I have heard him declare with much exultation, that he would back them at riding a horse, trowling for a pike, or trimming a cock, against any three boys of their age in the kingdom.

He finds the more occasion for their assistance as deputies in matters of this kind, as of late he has betaken himself chiefly to the business of the public, having taken a very strong inclination to promote the good of his country. The death of a gentleman
who

who had been long in the commission of the peace, has thrown the business of that department chiefly on Mr Bustle, who now does little else but study law-cases, convene meetings about highways, turnpikes, bridges, and game-licences, and ride all over the county, dispensing justice, redressing wrongs, removing nuisances, and punishing delinquents. In this the activity and eagerness of his nature has sometimes, I am afraid, in the practice of his office, got the better of the knowledge he had stored up on the theory of it. Besides receiving several incendiary letters, which he did not value a rush, and even I should have had the courage to despise, there are two or three actions of assault and false imprisonment raised against him, for acts done in the course of keeping the peace of the country. Indeed his plans for keeping the peace have turned out, like some others formed with the best intention in the world, exactly the reverse of what he expected from them, the country having been in perpetual war ever since he began putting them in execution. There have been such bickerings amongst the Gentlemen about widening of roads, removing of dunghills, pulling down cottages, and punishing of vagrants, that one half of the neighbours are scarce in speaking terms with the other. Some of them, who are enemies to the patriotic measures of Mr Bustle, have, I understand, privately stirred up and supported those law-suits in which his public spirit has involved him. These I cannot help being uneasy about, as of very serious consequence to his fortune and family; but he himself seems not to regret them in the least. He assures me he shall carry them all with costs, and talks rather with satisfaction of going to town to assist in their management. If you should happen to meet with him, Mr Lounger, I should be happy, for my part, if you could teach him somewhat of your love of ease and indolence. I have many reasons for wishing to forego all the reputation he will acquire by his activity, for a little peace and quiet. There is a saying of his father's, which I have heard the same old steward I mentioned before repeat very often, but Mr Bustle would never pay any regard to it: "When things are well as they are, he's a fool who tries how they may be."

I am, &c.

BARBARA BUSTLE.

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